

Idaho Bureau of Homeland Security

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

FALL 2009



H1N1 INFLUENZA UPDATE

Idaho, like all other states, is preparing to manage consequences of the H1N1 influenza pandemic. Statewide, the Department of Health & Welfare and Public Health Districts are educating their constituents and gearing up for flu vaccinations. BHS is also gearing up for flu season by working with its partners across the state to prepare for the possibility of a pandemic emergency.

During the last few months BHS has helped conduct a series of summits throughout the state. These summits are attended by health districts, local elected officials, school districts, and county emergency managements as well as state representatives from Health and Welfare and BHS. These agencies will be at the forefront of the response and recovery if a widespread pandemic occurs in Idaho.



Photo: Patrick Frischmuth, BHS

Ken Fagnant, BHS South East Area Field Officer, facilitates the H1N1 Summit held in Pocatello September 9, 2009

At these summits, attendees work through scenarios and solidify plans for how each agency and organization will work together to respond to a pandemic. One product of these meetings is a defined process by which BHS would support requests for assistance from counties and health districts, should their resources become expended.

H1N1 continued on p.2 »



Photo: Jay Baker, BHS

A damaged home from 13-14 July 2009 windstorm in Bonner County.

Long-term Recovery Committees Help Survivors

Long-term recovery is needed after a disaster when personal resources, insurance, government grant/loans are insufficient to meet the need of the individual. Although the response to that disaster may continue for a few weeks, recovery begins in the response phase and may last years.

Federal, state and local governments, the Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (VOAD) and private agencies are there for the response and the beginning of recovery. It is the community and the VOAD that remain

Recovery continued on p.6 »

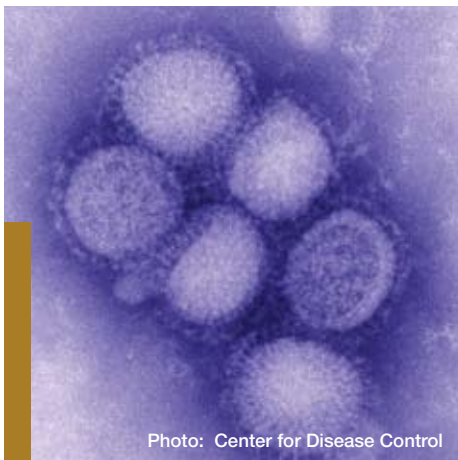


Photo: Center for Disease Control

H1N1 virus photo released by the CDC on May 2nd, 2009

H1N1 continued from cover »

The education of individuals, employers, and organizations is one of the strongest weapons against the spread the H1N1 virus. Simple precautions such as washing hands often, covering coughs and sneezes, and staying home when sick will prevent many cases of not only H1N1, but seasonal flu as well. Public education specialists and public information officers across the state are working together to present preparedness information to all

Idahoans. As vaccinations become available, these same people will be working to encourage vulnerable populations to get their shots.

Patrick Frischmuth, Deputy Director, Plans

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BHS Unveils New Logo



This fall it is my pleasure to present the Idaho Bureau of Homeland Security's new logo. This logo will be the agency brand and provide recognition and visibility to the organization. Designed by Amy Stauffer, the logo features symbols of communications, emergency management, and homeland security. The design also incorporates the main functions of the bureau which are to prevent, protect, respond and recover from all disasters within Idaho. The adoption of an official logo by BHS is another step in establishing the agency on a firm and

lasting foundation. It is the visual representation of a dynamic organization with a vital role to play in emergency management in Idaho.

As always BHS is striving to provide the highest quality emergency management and homeland security support to all Idahoans. Please feel free to contact me (bshawver@bhs.idaho.gov) or any member of the Idaho Bureau of Homeland Security team if you have any ideas on how we can better support you or improve the focus of this ongoing publication.

Thanks

Bill

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“ It is the visual representation of a dynamic organization with a vital role to play in emergency management in Idaho ”



This newsletter is the official newsletter of the Idaho Bureau of Homeland Security. This quarterly publication is intended for the use of the State of Idaho's emergency management community, legislators, government officials and others who are interested in learning about Idaho's emergency management techniques and procedures.

C.L. "Butch" Otter, Governor

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Statewide Interoperability Executive Council

The SIEC and Idaho's statewide emergency response stakeholders have begun meetings to form and implement regionally focused, practitioner-driven interoperable communications governance. The governance structures will utilize a regional approach and leverage the working agreements and investments already in place among the Idaho emergency response community. Their first task will be to determine how the systems will be operated, maintained, and sustained. The SIEC invites your participation.

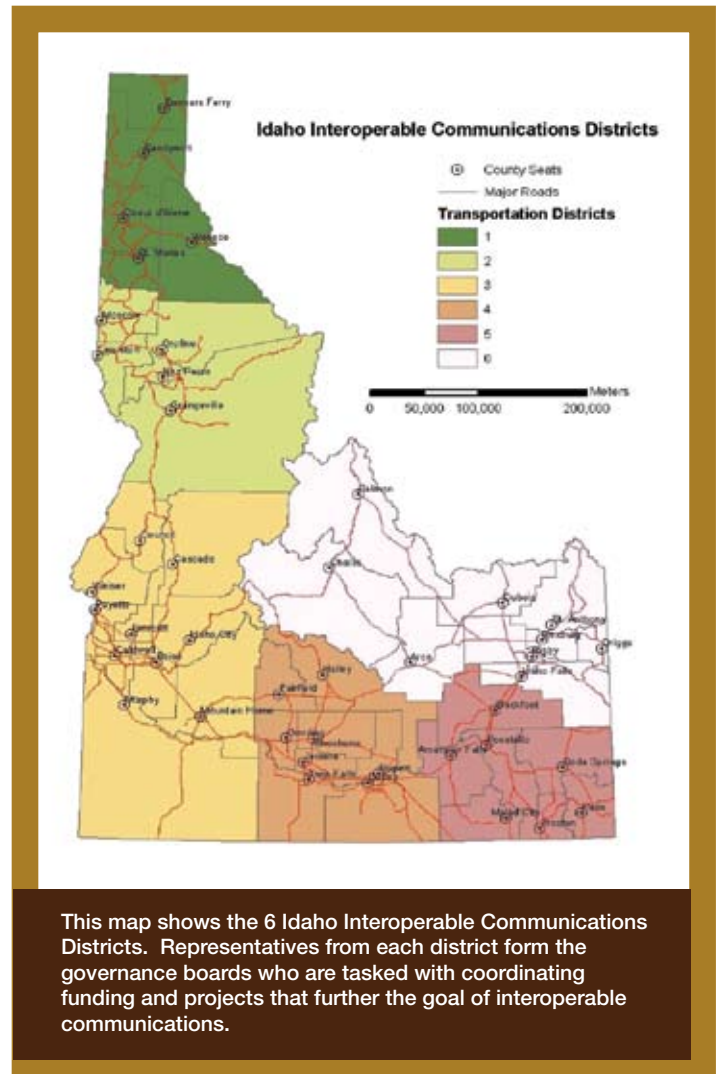
Why is governance important?

For any State and its regions to improve communications interoperability, collaboration and participation from relevant emergency response stakeholders is essential. A formalized, statewide governance system provides a unified approach across multiple disciplines and jurisdictions; this approach aids the funding, effectiveness, and overall support for communications interoperability. Establishing a governing body and overarching system is critical to successfully addressing the key challenges associated with achieving Interoperable communications. Statewide governance and coordination also provide the framework in which stakeholders can collaborate and make decisions that reflect shared objectives. Official governance systems prove to be beneficial in that they are respectful of individual agencies' roles and responsibilities yet provide each agency with the communication networks necessary to cooperate with other agencies.

How will governance be achieved?

Interoperability hinges on diverse stakeholders cooperating across disciplines and jurisdictions. For Idaho's purposes, the term "governance" is used to describe a support system that helps decision makers within Federal, State, local, and tribal governments make informed decisions that meet stakeholder requirements.

Therefore, the SIEC has developed a plan to formally establish three regional governance boards. To begin, these boards will be comprised of stakeholders at the local and tribal District levels of government, and will honor the mutual aid relationships currently recognized throughout a jurisdiction. The process will begin with outreach to those individuals most involved in public safety communications decision making who are authorized to represent the interests of their jurisdiction.



The District meetings will identify individuals to be seated on the regional governance boards.

The pilot for this project began in Districts 5 & 6; future meetings in Districts 1, 2, 3, and 4 are scheduled for the September-October timeframe.

Please visit the BHS website www.bhs.idaho.gov, click on Events, beginning September 3rd for more information on District meetings or contact Dodie Collier SIEC Program Manager at 208.407.6914.

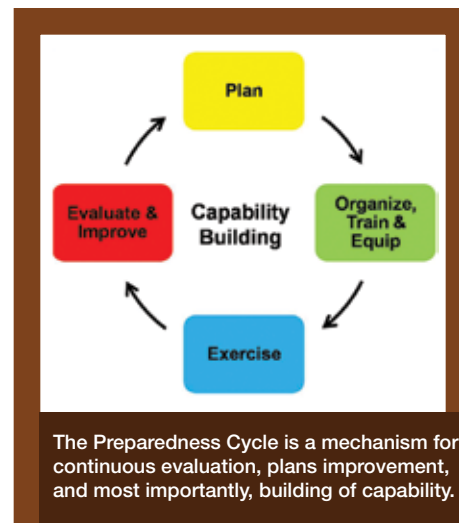
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Introducing the revised Idaho Emergency Operations Plan (IDEOP)

The IDEOP has recently been revised to better align with the National Response Framework and to incorporate National Incident Management System principles. This plan provides a comprehensive framework for statewide emergency management in support of local government. It addresses the roles and responsibilities of state government organizations and provides a link to federal, tribal, local, and private organizations and resources that may be activated to address disasters and emergencies in Idaho. You can review and/or download an electronic copy of the revised IDEOP via the BHS website at <http://www.bhs.idaho.gov> under "Hot Topics."

Now that the IDEOP has been updated, the real work begins! The development or the revision of an Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) is just the beginning of the

process. It is now time to implement a comprehensive "Preparedness Cycle" that provides a mechanism for continuous evaluation, plans improvement, and most importantly, helps to build capability.



The Preparedness Cycle involves:

- Writing or revising the plan;
- Organizing the team, providing adequate training, and properly equipping personnel;
- Exercising the plan to validate key concepts; and
- Evaluating performance, documenting results, and developing an improvement plan.

The revision of your EOP restarts the cyclical process of the Preparedness Cycle which is critical to building capability. It's impossible to plan for every emergency or disaster that might occur, so the best strategy is to be flexible. Remember, planning is a journey and not a destination.

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Continuity of Operations (COOP) Planning

The Idaho COOP Program has made significant progress since its initiation in the fall of 2008. Once Governor Otter approved the overall COOP implementation strategy, the program was briefed to 28 State Agency Directors in Oct 08. Immediately following, BHS conducted a COOP 'Tools and Techniques' course for state agency COOP planners in Nov 08, providing planners with the necessary information enabling them to work through the development of their agency COOP plans.

The first year's effort culminated with those agency planners attending a FEMA COOP Planners' "Train the Trainer Workshop" in June of this year, which enabled them to refine and finalize their individual state agency plans.

BHS is now in the process of collecting and archiving state agency COOP plans.

Significant to the program is the BHS COOP/COG web page: (http://www.bhs.idaho.gov/Pages/Preparedness/COOP_COG.aspx) which contains valuable information including a COOP Planning Manual and COOP Plan Template, designed to lead planners through the COOP plan development process.

Additionally, there are links to FEMA's Continuity Guidance Circular 1 (Continuity Guidance for Non-Federal Entities) and IDHW's Pan-Flu website and several other useful COOP sites. Finally, all the PowerPoint presentations that were part of the BHS Tools and Techniques Class are posted there for anyone interested in reviewing them.

An organization's continuity capability – its ability to perform its essential functions continuously – rests upon key components or pillars, which are in turn built on the foundation of continuity planning and

continuity program management.

The four "Pillars" are:

Leadership – need to address Orders of Succession, Delegations of Authority and other management aspects.



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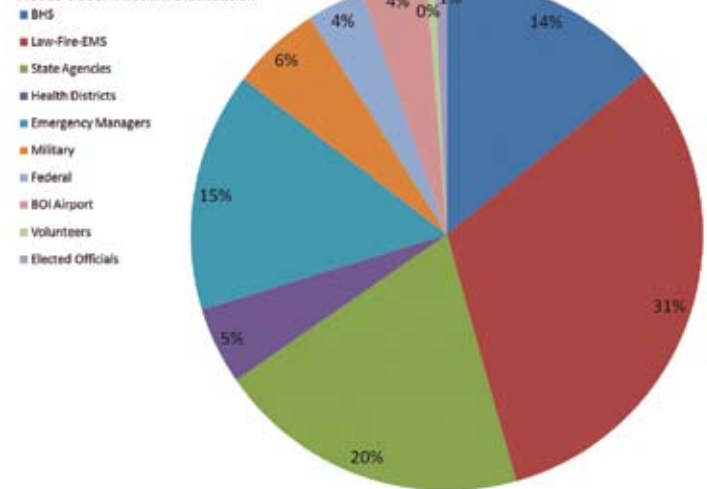
WebEOC - Creating a Common Operating Picture

WebEOC is a crisis information management system that enables better incident management and real-time information sharing to provide a common operating picture around the state. Idaho's WebEOC system is hosted by the Idaho Bureau of Homeland Security and provided to local and state jurisdictions, allowing critical information to flow up and down the various echelons of emergency management.

WebEOC is a crucial component to successful management of events on a local, regional and state level. The goal is to ensure that WebEOC is integrated statewide to the fullest extent possible. Working closely with Area Field Officers and County Emergency Managers, WebEOC access and training is offered across the state to emergency personnel.

This technology has already been used to coordinate many events in Idaho. Every day, information on hazards and other situations around the state is

WebEOC User Account Distribution



monitored and shared. County Emergency Managers have the ability to directly enter resource requests in WebEOC; resource needs can then be tracked and monitored.

Major events like the Western Idaho Fair and the Special Olympics World Winter Games that were hosted in Idaho last February were largely coordinated using WebEOC. During the Special Olympics, 7 different venues including a Unified Command created and shared Situation Reports, Incident Action Plans, area maps, and real-time situation information using WebEOC.

The use of WebEOC for event coordination and emergency management is moving to the forefront as a way to share critical information in Idaho.

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COOP continued from previous page >>

Staff — leadership and staff need to be trained, develop your training and exercise program as well as Human Capital issues.

Facilities — identify where you would relocate if your primary facility is no longer available.

Communications and Technology — need to address your agency's access to Vital Records, Databases, and Systems needed to

perform your identified essential functions.

As the foundation and pillars are developed and reinforced, the performance of essential functions can follow. This leads to an overall continuity capability. Note how every piece is important — weakness in the foundation or any of the pillars results in a less robust capability.

The next steps in the overall state COOP

program will be to extend the planning effort to other jurisdictions, municipalities and branches of state government. In the meantime, anyone who wants to get a head start on their planning is encouraged to go to the BHS COOP web page to get started.

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Hazardous Materials Special Teams Program

Our Mission

The mission of the Hazardous Materials — Special Teams Program is to protect lives, property and the environment throughout the State of Idaho by providing effective, coordinated support to citizens, first response agencies, Local Emergency Planning Committees (LEPC's), industry, and state agencies.

In order to fulfill this mission, we are working daily to recover costs for response to Hazardous Materials incidents. We are coordinating with the special teams throughout the state to provide them the best training and equipment possible, and we are assisting industry to

ensure they comply with regulatory requirements.

LEPC's are a vital component of this and many other programs. Although LEPC's were originally created to focus on hazardous materials, they are the perfect forum for all hazards.



An active LEPC is a very important step jurisdictions can take towards improving their ability to effectively deal with emergencies. With broad based membership, LEPC's can bring independent organizations together under the umbrella of a shared mission and a common vision, to protect the health and safety of our citizens.

An updated LEPC handbook is now available on the Bureau of Homeland Security website. This handbook will provide basic information for LEPC's as well as Federal and State statutes, a sample of by-laws and a sample member nomination letter. Also included is a copy of the hazardous materials incident cost recovery packet and other information that may be helpful.

If you have questions or need assistance regarding your LEPC or any other component of the Haz Mat-Special Teams Program, please let us know.

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Recovery continued from cover >>

through the long-term recovery. They will often come together to create a Long-Term Recovery Committee (LTRC).

LTRCs bring agencies together to collaborate in order to effectively coordinate their efforts to help the survivors of a disaster recover. The key players in the community need to be identified and come together to organize their efforts. These agencies should meet regularly prior to a disaster to determine what each is capable and willing to do after a disaster. This allows for vital networking and the building of trust between these partners during the less stressful planning phase of the emergency cycle.

A LTRC is formed early in the disaster cycle to begin the process of preparing

for long term recovery by creating a recovery plan and soliciting funds and materials to support that plan. It is important to get information out to individuals early on about how to recover with limited resources. They may not know how to create a recovery plan or may have difficulties saving the large sums of money they receive for rebuilding.

The message a LTRC provides may help individuals understand that if they receive money from grants and/or loans, they should save it to buy supplies for rebuilding. Volunteers can then help with the labor, thereby stretching those funds to do more for their recovery.

Case management is an essential component of LTRC. It allows for the needs of survivors to be assessed and

brought to the LTRC for review. The LTRC agencies then determine who can support the survivor and how that will be accomplished. Providing knowledgeable case workers to those in need will speed up the process of their recovery.

If you are interested in forming a LTRC, more information can be found in the LTRC Manual at <http://www.nvoad.org/NewsInformation/PlanningDocuments/tabid/83/Default.aspx>. This manual introduces how to organize and operate a LTRC.

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Haz Mat Operations and Special Teams

Idaho continues to have problems with mercury spills. When most of us think of mercury, we think of playing with it as children and sometimes fail to understand how serious it can be to our health.

According to the Idaho Department of Environmental Quality, mercury is one of a number of persistent bioaccumulative toxic chemicals. It can cause serious ecological and health problems when released to the environment. Even the smallest amount of mercury needs to be treated as a serious issue.

- Children are most sensitive to mercury poisoning during early development to age six.
- Mercury is toxic to the nervous system. Short term exposure can result in nausea, shortness of breath, and bronchitis.
- Exposure to high levels of mercury over extended time can result in shakiness, tremors, numbness in the fingers and toes, loss of muscle control, memory loss, and kidney disease.

Potentially toxic mercury is found in a wide variety of household products like

thermometers. Knowing what products contain mercury, handling them properly, and knowing what to do in case of a spill will help limit the risk of mercury exposure to family members and pets.

Products that contain mercury that can be found in your home:

- Thermometers
- Thermostats
- Fluorescent and mercury vapor lamps
- Mercury Switches (switches with a “smooth” movement rather than a “click”)
- Old chemistry sets and toys
- Blood pressure gauges

What NEVER to do with mercury spills.

- NEVER use a vacuum cleaner to clean up mercury. The vacuum will put mercury into the air and increase exposure. The vacuum appliance will be contaminated and have to be thrown away.

- NEVER use a broom to clean up mercury. It will break the mercury into smaller droplets and spread them.
- NEVER pour mercury down a drain. It may lodge in the plumbing and cause future problems during plumbing repairs. If discharged, it can cause pollution of the septic tank or sewage treatment plant.
- NEVER wash mercury-contaminated items in a washing machine. Mercury may contaminate the machine and/or pollute sewage.
- NEVER walk around if your shoes might be contaminated with mercury. Contaminated clothing can also spread mercury.



All seven of Idaho's Regional Hazardous Materials Response Teams have special equipment to handle mercury spills. This includes such things as mercury specific spill kits, mercury vacuums, mercury collection siphons, mercury vapor detectors, and special sprays to help to identify mercury.

You can find additional information on the following websites:

www.epa.gov/mercury

www.deq.idaho.gov/waste/prog_issues/haz_waste/mercury_spill.cfm

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A regional response team takes part in a mass decon training exercise.

Who is the Disaster/Emergency Services Coordinator?

Within each of the 44 counties and 3 tribal organizations in Idaho, there lies a resource with the responsibility of coordinating resources in the time of a disaster. This individual may be under the local Sheriff's Office or may be within their own department, and are known as the "Department of Disaster/Emergency Management Coordinator."

Each of these individuals coordinates daily on preparedness, planning, mitigation and recovery efforts with their local first responding agencies, health care facilities, industries, volunteer agencies, hospitals, elected officials, school districts, citizens etc.

In many Idaho counties, you will find an active Local Emergency Planning

Committee (LEPC). In a LEPC, various agencies gather to meet and discuss exercise/training/equipment needs. They also plan for and mitigate issues that can impact the citizens and property in their area. They may currently be working on the implementation of the Mapping Your Neighborhood Program, Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) training, or sponsoring a Volunteer Organization Active in Disaster (VOAD). The coordinator is also busy updating and revising the tribal or counties Emergency Operations Plan and developing an All-Hazards Mitigation Plan for the county.

Emergency managers coordinate with the National Weather Service for training storm spotters. They implement the Storm Ready Program in each county, educate

students in the local schools on safety issues during National Weather Week and promote the purchase of a NOAA Weather Radio for the dissemination of information to citizens during a weather emergency.

I have only listed a few of the responsibilities that the disaster/emergency services coordinator does on a daily basis. The coordinator is a valuable resource who should be recognized for his or her level of expertise and support during an incident or disaster in their county.

Jackie Frey, Twin Falls Disaster Coordinator and President, Idaho Emergency Management Association (IEMA)
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Critical Infrastructure, Key Resources Protection and H1N1

Idaho's Critical Infrastructure and Key Resources (CI/KR) Protection Program has largely focused on identifying and cataloging significant assets across our State with the purpose of protecting CI/KR from all human-caused threats, earthquakes, floods, wildfires, and other natural disasters. Public and private stakeholders have been key partners in this effort, however the landscape is constantly changing and new threats and vulnerabilities are identified daily. Today, a great concern is the H1N1 virus and how it could adversely impact our CI/KR.

According to the World Health Organization, as of September 25 there have been more than 300,000 laboratory confirmed cases of H1N1 world-wide (leading to 3,917 deaths) that have been reported. The actual number of those having the virus is much greater as countless cases go unreported and many nations have stopped counting individual or mild cases.

The H1N1 threat is real and the impact that a severe outbreak could have on the State of Idaho's critical assets and the services they provide is immeasurable. Increased and

sustained absenteeism in the range of 20 to 40% of personnel within all eighteen sectors of CI/KR would significantly impact the ability for private and public entities to provide timely and adequate service to our population. The impact would be most noticeable in the sectors of: Agriculture and Food, Emergency Services, Energy, Public Health and Healthcare, Transportation, and Water. All these sectors provide essential services to the well being of our communities and the prevention and treatment of future outbreaks or disease.

Eighty-five percent of critical infrastructure resources reside in the private sector, which normally does not have quality continuity of operations plans and those that do routinely do not focus on pandemic outbreaks. BHS strongly encourages the private business community to act now and upgrade their existing continuity of operations plans to include contingencies for a significant pandemic outbreak that will surely test the operational capability of even the most prepared organizations.

There are some high quality and helpful

publications that will contribute immeasurably to the development of plans and enhancement of any existing plans. The first is Business Continuity Planning that can be located at: <http://www.ready.gov/business/plan/index.html>. The second is PANDEMIC INFLUENZA Preparedness, Response, and Recovery: Guide for Critical Infrastructure and Key Resources and all Sector-Specific Annexes which can be located at: <http://www.pandemicflu.gov/plan/pdf/cikrpandemicinfluenzaguide.pdf>. The third is Guidance for Businesses and Employers to Plan and Respond to the 2009-2010 Influenza Season which can be found at: <http://www.flu.gov/plan/workplaceplanning/guidance.html>.

It is essential that both private and public CI/KR stakeholders aggressively make plans for their organizations and take a proactive stance to combat the threat of the H1N1 virus during a crucial time for our State and Nation.

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Meet your emergency manager:

Melvin Johnson, Nez Perce County

Mel Johnson has been the Director of the Office of Emergency Management for the City of Lewiston and Nez Perce County since October of 1994. He works closely with elected officials and the city manager, advising them about public safety programs.

This close working relationship was critical in 1996 and 1997, with successive Presidential disaster declarations for flooding and winter storms. The Emergency Management Office was the hub for all flood related projects – from response to damage survey reports to disaster closeout documentation for public assistance projects. Interagency cooperation was vital throughout disaster response and recovery. This team approach was especially important for assistance to the community of Peck, which sustained the most damage. Mitigation grants were used to reduce risk from future floods through the purchase of several pieces of property. In addition, road damage was repaired, stream banks were stabilized, and the City water treatment system was upgraded.

Disaster response and recovery was practiced in a series of exercises involving simulated school bus accidents, airplane incidents, chemical incidents, floods, and pandemic flu. The full-scale airplane and hazardous materials exercise involved Federal, State (both Idaho and Washington), and local participants. Over 200 individuals representing fifty different agencies and departments participated. The exercise was filmed and that film (AirEx 96) received recognition and a first place award from the International Association of Emergency Managers.

To minimize the impact of weather-related disasters, Mel worked with Lewiston and Nez Perce County public safety departments to qualify for the National Weather Service “Storm Ready” program. The City of Lewiston and Nez Perce County were the first Idaho participants to be recognized as a “Storm Ready” community, and received National recognition during the 2001 Governor’s Conference.

The Chimney Rock complex wild land fire (2004) saw another Emergency Operations Center activation, as did the severe thunderstorms in May 2005. This storm caused over \$1 million damage to Garden Gulch and Hubbard Gulch Roads, and resulted in another Presidential disaster declaration. The Flood Mitigation Grant Program was used to assist a family whose home was severely damaged in this event.

Mel Johnson’s primary focus over the last three years has been planning and preparing for incidents of national significance – such as pandemic flu and economic crises. These hazards/threats involve degradation or failure of the critical infrastructure. Their impact is long (months to years), and unpredictable, due to the many unknown interactions between the complex systems that are affected. Mel’s recent efforts to address this predicament are founded on a combination of prepared families, sustainable communities, and effective government. This philosophy seeks to build local capability in response to the Department of Homeland Security’s call for a “Culture of Preparedness.”



Mel Johnson shows some of the emergency preparedness items he keeps on hand.

Mel strongly supports and promotes training throughout the county and city. He has completed the Professional Development Series, is an active member of the International Association of Emergency Managers, the Idaho Association of Emergency Managers, and in 1996 received his certification as an Emergency Manager (CEM). In 1999, he was recognized by the State of Idaho as the Emergency Management Coordinator of the Year.

Mel can be reached at (208) 799-3084 or email him at melvinjohnson@co.nezperce.id.us

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FLOOD RISK MANAGEMENT PROGRAM - Idaho Silver Jackets

The State of Idaho recently became the third chartered state to have a Silver Jackets core team. The Silver Jackets initiative is the state-level implementation of the US Army Corps of Engineers National Flood Risk Management Program. The idea and purpose behind the Silver Jackets is to facilitate a collaborative approach for stakeholders in flood hazard areas to understand each others' roles and programs for managing flood risk.



The Silver Jackets' logo illustrates their mission of coordination between many agencies to develop solutions to flood hazard issues.

The Idaho Silver Jackets core team is a coalition of agencies who collaborate to develop comprehensive and sustainable solutions to flood hazard issues, including mitigation planning, flood hazard mapping, risk reduction activities, and response and recovery planning. The core team includes Idaho Department of Water Resources, Idaho Bureau of Homeland Security, US Army Corps of Engineers, Federal Emergency Management Agency, and the National Weather Service. Team membership is expected to evolve, with other agencies participating depending on the State's flood risk priorities.

Since no single agency has all the answers, Silver Jackets uses a 'patchwork quilt' approach to piece together the knowledge and expertise of many agencies to develop and implement a statewide approach to reduce losses from flooding. Experts are brought from different fields to educate and share information as well as brainstorm and create solutions to problems that local and state governments face from flood hazards.

The Idaho Silver Jackets core team provides a continuous mechanism to reduce risk throughout the flood life-cycle, including planning, mitigation and emergency response. Another component of the Silver Jackets involves educating the public on flood risks so the community can have a better understanding of flood related problems and programs that may be available to help local governments solve those problems.

The Silver Jackets core team recently hosted a flood hazard listing session on August 12, 2009 to introduce the program to stakeholders for the first time and to solicit comment on the flood hazard unit of the State of Idaho All Hazard Mitigation Plan.

The State of Idaho Silver Jackets Charter will be posted in the flood mitigation section of the BHS web-page in the near future. Additional information regarding the Silver Jackets Program is available from the Idaho Silver Jackets Program Coordinator, Ellen Berggren, ellen.m.berggren@usace.army.mil or 208-345-2065.

The Silver Jackets' logo illustrates their mission of coordination between many agencies to develop solutions to flood hazard issues.

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2010 Hazard Mitigation Assistance (HMA) Grants Update

The interest from local governments and state agencies regarding mitigation projects has been outstanding. BHS is completing reviews of approximately 40 letters of intent for the HMA grant programs. BHS let a technical services contract to assist eligible applicants with completing the BCA required for their project applications. Remember that all project applications must be submitted via the E-Grants system no later than November 6, 2009. If you have any questions or need assistance with your application please contact either Mark Stephensen at 208-422-5726 / mstephensen@bhs.idaho.gov or Dave Jackson at 208-422-3047 / djackson@bhs.idaho.gov. Thanks for the great response to these programs and good luck with your applications.

Earthquake Awareness Month 2009

This October, Idaho BHS will partner with the Idaho Geological Survey for Earthquake Awareness Month. October marks the 26th anniversary of the magnitude 6.9 Borah Peak Earthquake, and both agencies will be promoting education and preparedness for one of our state's priority hazards.

Although rarely in the news, earthquakes are a fact of life here in Idaho. Our state is among the most active of states in terms of the number of earthquakes experienced each year. Two of the largest historic earthquakes in the continental United States occurred in Idaho or within a few miles of Idaho in 1983 and 1959. These powerful magnitude 6.9 and 7.3 events caused fatalities as well as destroying buildings, roads and other structures.

Large, damaging earthquakes are most likely in the mountainous regions of eastern and central Idaho, north and south of the

S Snake River plain. However, all parts of Idaho have at least a moderate threat from earthquake shaking. Due to the fact that earthquakes are difficult to predict, it is important for all Idahoans to have a disaster plan, a disaster supply kit, and to consider making their homes safer from earthquakes.

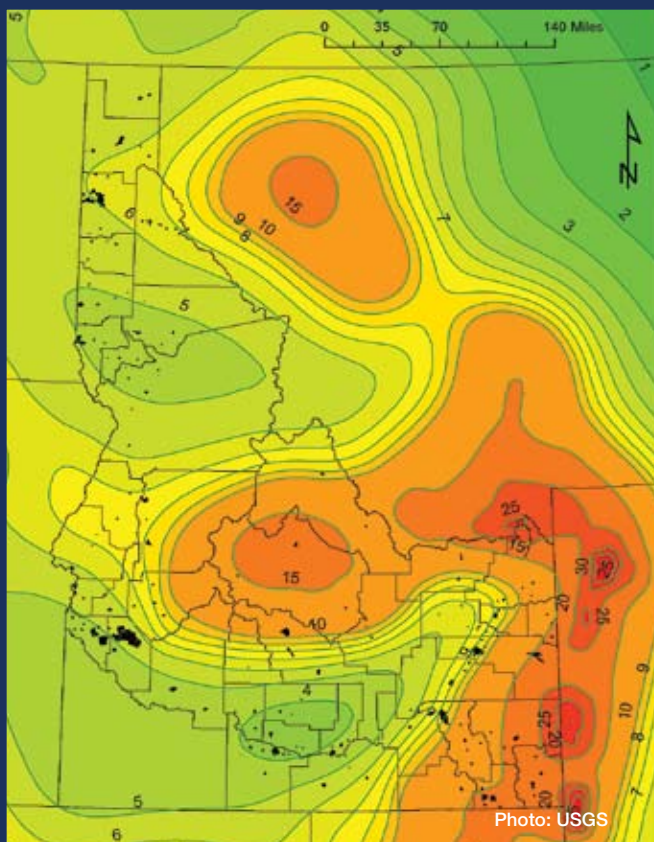
To commemorate Earthquake Awareness Month, the Idaho Geological Survey and Idaho BHS developed the booklet "Putting Down Roots in Earthquake Country, Your Handbook for Earthquakes in Idaho." Utah and California developed similar booklets, and they have been customized to provide detailed information on Idaho seismicity, structural and non-structural mitigation measures and personal preparedness information. The booklet will be printed in large numbers and will be inserted into the Sunday newspapers of Boise, Nampa/Caldwell, Twin Falls, Pocatello and Idaho Falls. Additional copies of this booklet will be available through our website or by emailing citizen.corps@bhs.idaho.gov

In addition to the booklet, public service announcements have been developed and will be read during the news and traffic reports of several radio stations. Based on Idaho seismicity, these radio announcements will target the markets of southwest, central and eastern Idaho. The message of these radio slots is to raise the awareness of Idahoans to the fact that earthquakes do happen in Idaho and simple things can be done to prepare for them. Listeners will be directed to the BHS website where they can find more information on mitigation and preparedness measures.

To increase the visibility of Earthquake Awareness Month, Governor Otter will issue a proclamation in support of the campaign. This support from our governor, as well as the collaboration between agencies at the state and local level will ensure the widest distribution and awareness of earthquake preparedness education material.

We know earthquakes happen in Idaho, and we also know how to reduce losses when one occurs. This campaign will encourage Idahoans to take those steps to protect their homes and families from the unpredictable earthquake.

Robert Feeley, Citizen Corps Program Manager / Public Information Officer
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This Idaho earthquake probability map shows the areas of the state with higher chances of ground movement. The map patterns correspond closely to the location of the Intermountain Seismic Belt and known active faults.

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New Seismic Monitoring Station Installed Near McCall

Dozens of earthquakes occur in Idaho each year. Most are small, but scientific studies show large damaging earthquakes could occur in Idaho at any time.

The area between Cascade and McCall is notable for earthquake swarms. During a swarm, thousands of small shallow earthquakes occur over several weeks to months within a few tens of square miles. In 2005, a swarm south of Cascade produced five magnitude 4 earthquakes and many thousands of smaller events. The swarm caused concern because about 10% of major earthquakes in the western US are preceded by swarms. It also demonstrated a gap in Idaho seismic monitoring capabilities. Many of the swarm earthquakes were poorly located and there were significant delays in event reporting.

The U.S. Geological Survey installed a new seismic monitoring station in late August, 2009 near McCall. This station is expected to improve Idaho seismic monitoring, particularly in the Cascade-McCall area. Seismic monitoring is a vital component of earthquake hazard management, and modern seismic stations can detect, locate and determine the size of earthquakes using near-real-time, 24/7 data transmission.

When large earthquakes occur, crucial information is available in minutes on the internet and as cell phone and email messages. Seismic monitoring also helps scientists and engineers improve their understanding of the causes and consequences of seismicity.

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Solar panel and radio telemetry dish of the new seismic station.